

PrEP Factsheet

www.getprepd.org.au

GET PrEP'D

Get PrEP'D is an Australian national initiative for gay, bisexual and other men (cis or trans), non-binary inclusive, who have sex with men about PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis).

WHAT IS PrEP?

PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. **PrEP** is a pill that HIV negative people can take to prevent HIV. Taking **PrEP** before being exposed to HIV means there's enough drug in your system to stop HIV if it gets into your body. If **PrEP** is taken as prescribed it has proved very effective at preventing HIV and reduces the risk of HIV transmission by almost **100%**.

WHO IS PrEP FOR?

PrEP is recommended for all people at risk of HIV.

Men who have sex with men (including trans and non-binary) may be at risk if you:



have had or are likely to have condomless sex (or if the condom breaks or falls off) with casual partners



have had or are likely to have condomless sex (or if the condom breaks or falls off) with an HIV positive partner who is not on treatment or is on treatment but has a detectable viral load



use recreational drugs such as crystal (methamphetamine) or GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate)



have recently had an STI such as anal gonorrhoea, anal chlamydia, or syphilis

HOW CAN I START TAKING PrEP?

To commence **PrEP** you will first need to visit your doctor to get a prescription. Any GP can write a prescription for **PrEP**. Before taking **PrEP**, you must be HIV negative, so will need to have an HIV test. Your doctor will also do tests for other STI tests and check your kidney health. Once you commence **PrEP**, you'll need a full sexual health check every three months when you go back to get your next **PrEP** prescription and your doctor may also check on your kidney health



WHERE CAN I GET PrEP AND HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

If you are an Australian resident with a **Medicare** card, once you have your prescription from the doctor, you can get **PrEP** from your nearest pharmacy as you do with other prescription drugs (although some pharmacies may need to order it in). As with other prescription drugs that are subsidised by the government, when you get **PrEP** from your pharmacy you will need to make a payment at the pharmacy.

This is currently **\$31.60** per script (**30 pills**) and **\$7.70** for concession card holders.

	FULL PRICE	CONCESSION CARD
30 PILLS	\$31.60	\$7.70

You can also purchase the drugs from an online overseas pharmacy and legally import them to Australia. The cost will vary, so comparing the prices the different **websites** charge can be useful.

You can find more information about the ways you can get **PrEP** here:

www.getprepd.org.au/ways-to-get-prep/

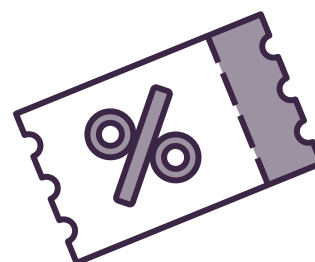


HOW CAN I ACCESS PrEP IF I DO NOT HAVE A MEDICARE CARD?

If you do not have a **Medicare** card, you can legally import **3 months'** worth of **PrEP** at a time through online overseas pharmacy websites. You will still require a prescription from your doctor before ordering online. This website has more information including how to search for these online overseas pharmacies: www.getprepd.org.au/ways-to-get-prep/#personalimportation.

WHAT IF I HAVE TROUBLE AFFORDING PrEP?

If you cannot afford to buy **PrEP**, you can apply for assistance through coupon schemes. You can find information about these here: www.getprepd.org.au/cant-afford-prep/



WHAT ABOUT OTHER STIS?

PrEP prevents HIV, but not other STIs or pregnancy. Regular sexual health checks are important for all sexually active men. If you are sexually active, you should have regular sex health checks every three months. If you're taking **PrEP**, these regular STI tests just become part of each visit to your doctor to get your **PrEP** scripts to ensure that if you have an STI it is diagnosed and treated quickly. STIs can show no symptoms, which is why regular testing is important.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE PrEP?




There are different ways to take **PrEP**. It is still the same drug, just taken in different ways. You can choose an option that works for you.



DAILY PrEP

If you are a cisgender (not trans) man who has sex with men, you can start by taking **two pills** at least **2-24 hours** before sex to get high levels of protection.

Then take one pill every day.

CISGENDER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN:		
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
 Highly protected		

If you are trans or gender diverse person who has sex with guys, then daily **PrEP** is recommended. This ensures full protection if you are taking gender-affirming hormones and if you have front hole or vaginal sex. Take one pill daily for a full seven days to get full protection, then **one pill every day**.

EVERYONE ELSE:			
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
			
DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	
		 Full protection	

Daily **PrEP** can also include taking **PrEP** for particular periods of time when you want to protect yourself from HIV, such as during summer, over a holiday or pride events.

ON-DEMAND PREP (OR EVENT-BASED PrEP)

You may prefer on-demand **PrEP** if you are not having enough sex to justify daily **PrEP**, to reduce costs, if you do not want to take pills daily. You need to be able to plan ahead for when you may be having sex or be able to delay sex by at least **2 hours**. If you use on-demand **PrEP**, you need to stick to the dosing schedule as any missed doses means it may not prevent HIV. If you find it difficult to remember to take medication, this may not be the best option for you.

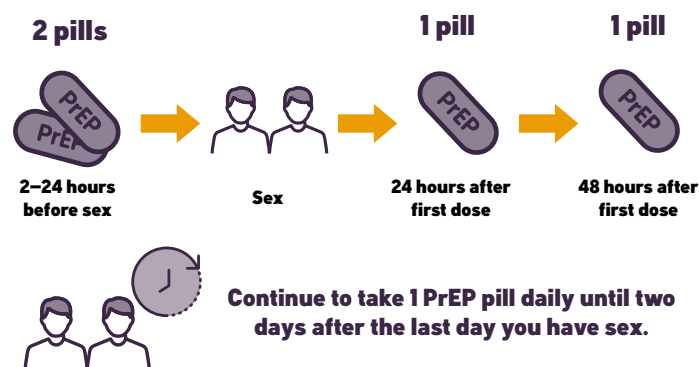
If you are trans or gender diverse person, on-demand **PrEP** is not recommended. Daily **PrEP** is recommended to ensure full protection if you are taking gender-affirming hormones and if you have front hole or vaginal sex.

To take on-demand PrEP, you need to:

- take two pills at least 2-24 hours before sex
- take one pill 24 hours after the first double dose,
- take one pill 24 hours after that (48 hours after the first double dose)

An easy way to remember it is: **2+1+1**

If you have sex again in this time, you need to continue taking one pill each day until two days after the last time you had sex.



For more information about PrEP for trans and gender diverse people, [check out this fact sheet](#).

HOW CAN I STOP TAKING PrEP SAFELY?

If you wish to stop taking **PrEP**, if you are a cisgender (not trans) man that has sex with other men, you will need to take one pill a day for **48 hours** after the last time you had sex. If you are a trans or gender diverse person, you will need to take one pill a day for **28 days** after the **last time you had sex**.

HOW SHOULD I START PrEP AGAIN AFTER A BREAK?

Many guys stopped taking **PrEP** during the COVID-19 pandemic as lockdowns and other restrictions meant they were having less sex. If after a break you are going to start **PrEP** again, the first thing to consider is when was your last sexual health check, to make sure you are HIV negative. If you have not had one in the last three months, you should consider doing so. You also should check how many pills you have left over, if they have been stored safely, that they haven't expired and if you have a current prescription.



When you start taking PrEP again, make sure you follow the dosing schedule for the way to take PrEP that is suitable for you to make sure you get full protection.

WHAT SIDE EFFECTS ARE THERE?

The drugs used for **PrEP** are safe and well-tolerated. Most people experience no side effects at all. Some people will experience mild side effects such as nausea, diarrhoea and headaches when commencing **PrEP**. These side effects normally disappear within a few days or weeks.



Very rarely, **PrEP** can affect your kidney function. There is also a very small effect on bone mineral density, but this will go back to normal after stopping **PrEP**. Your doctor will monitor you for side effects with blood tests for kidney function.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER HIV PREVENTION OPTIONS?

More than ever before, there are a range of options available to prevent HIV. You can choose an option or combination of options that work best for you. **PrEP** is one of the options. Other options include:

- **Condoms** when used correctly are effective to prevent HIV and pregnancy, and they help reduce the risk of other STIs (although they do not eliminate the risk).
- **Undetectable viral load (UVL)** is effective to prevent HIV transmission. If a person with HIV is taking treatment and has an undetectable viral load this means they cannot pass on HIV to their partners. This is known as Treatment as Prevention. You might also hear about this described as '**U=U**' which stands for 'Undetectable equals Untransmittable'.
- **Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)** is available if you think you have been exposed to HIV. This is not the same as PrEP. PEP is a course of drugs taken for one month after a possible exposure to HIV. **PEP** should be started as soon as possible. It is most effective when started within **24 hours** but must be started within 72 hours of exposure. For more information visit www.getpep.info.

There is more information about the ways to prevent HIV, here:

www.getprepd.org.au/other-ways-to-prevent-hiv/

For more information: www.getprepd.org.au